

After reviewing budget support documents and interviewing with budget process participants, auditors noted the following flaws in the actual budgeting process:

- For many programs, there was no background data to justify their existence.
- Data accompanying budget submissions were not interpreted to demonstrate a program's impact on learning. Often, these data simply indicated that a certain number of students improved, and a certain number had not.
- Auditors received no documentary evidence that instructional programs were rank ordered or prioritized at each level of decision making in the budgeting process to permit budget and program flexibility. Interviews substantiated the absence of successive prioritization. Such procedures could have made program adjustments more systematic and justifiable in instances where reduced funding necessitated such action.
- There was no uniform measure of student achievement that would permit cost-benefit comparisons across programs with the same or similar goals. For example, there was no assessment of academic gain per student per dollar expended. Lacking cost-benefit comparisons, the staff was unable to determine which programs would produce the best results per dollar spent.
- Certain employees told auditors that requests for funding did compete for budgetary approval, particularly non-funded requests at the district level. However, no documentary evidence was presented to support that assertion.

Based on this information, auditors evaluated the district's budgeting process using components of curriculum-driven budgeting. The results of that evaluation are displayed in Exhibit 5.2.1.

Criterion	Ratings	
	Adequate	Inadequate
1. Tangible, demonstrable connections are evident between assessments of curriculum effectiveness and allocations of resources.		X
2. Rank ordering of curriculum program components is provided to permit flexibility in budget expansion, reduction, or stabilization based on critical needs or priorities.		X
3. Cost benefits of curriculum program components are delineated in budget decision making.		X
4. Each budget request or submittal is described in terms of performance or results that permit evaluation of consequences of funding or not funding.		X
5. Budget requests compete with each other for funding based upon the evaluation of criticality of need and relationship to achievement of curriculum effectiveness.		X
6. Priorities for budget allocations are set by key educational staff participating in the decision-making process.	X	
7. Teacher and principal suggestions and ideas for budget priorities are incorporated into the decision-making process.	X	

Although criterion six was rated adequate, it was, in fact, only partially fulfilled. It was evident that key educational staff participated in the decision-making process and set priorities. However, those priorities were not determined using a curriculum-driven budgeting process and were not documented in a manner to permit constituents to ascertain the relative importance of those priorities.

Interviews and a review of school budgetary submissions indicated that site-based decision-making (SBDM) teams, mandated by Texas law and district policy, were involved in the process of educational programming and the budgetary decisions necessary to support those programs. Budgetary submissions contained the signatures of the SBDM team members acknowledging their

participation. However, those same sources highlighted the lack of linkages between campus operations, curriculum planning, budgetary decisions, and actual operations, as noted above.

The following comments by interviewees highlighted the status of instructional program and budgeting integration:

- “The process of planning-budgeting integration is not complete.”
- “We have no real discussion about decisions and how we’re connecting [programs] to achievement.”
- “There was no obvious [curriculum planning] process related to budgeting [during a recent informal review]. If somebody wanted something they just came in and said, ‘I want this,’ and it was done; there wasn’t much forethought into planning.”

Regarding prioritization of instructional programs for budget support, interviewees said:

- “We have [campuses] prioritize the additional funds they are requesting; the campus committee prioritizes the priorities from each department.”
- “There is no real process for taking requests back to the board, no process for prioritizing and sorting [requests].”
- “There is no priority system for budgeting...known to the board.”
- “No one’s ever presented anything that would be cut or not funded because of [board] decisions.”
- “There is no process for setting budget priorities.”
- “There are no policies that I am aware of regarding setting budget priorities.”

Auditors noted confusion regarding the budget development approach used by the district. A key administrator said, “We try to do a zero-based budgeting approach.” However, the district’s *Budget Planning Guidelines* for FY 1999-2000 and FY 2000-2001 clearly stated, “Resource allocations are based on historical trends,” suggesting an incremental approach. Zero-based and incremental budgeting are conflicting methodologies.

In summary, teachers, principals, community members, and other key decision makers did participate in the process of establishing educational and budgetary priorities. However, that process was not supported by sound curriculum-driven budgeting. Although policy and budgetary guidelines promoted some aspects of a curriculum-driven budgeting process, both were inadequate. The actual budgeting process lacked data-based documentation of need, cost-benefit program analyses, program prioritization according to need, rank ordering of programs by all decision-making bodies, comparison of competing programs, and analyses of the consequences of funding or not funding various programs. Overall, the design for a curriculum-based budgeting process was inadequate, and efforts to link curriculum goals to the budget were ineffective.

#### **Finding 5.3: Program Interventions for Improvement in Student Achievement Lack Sufficient Detail for Design and Development Effectiveness.**

School systems need strategies to ensure quality improvement in student learning, achievement of goals and objectives, and thereby demonstrate increased productivity. In audit terms, such efforts are called *interventions*. An effective school system receives information in the form of feedback from various sources and uses it to identify specific interventions to improve student performance. Sources of feedback may include formal needs assessments, student test performance, discipline records, follow-up studies of former students, and community surveys. Sound interventions are characterized by being tightly linked to instructional goals and needs, well planned, appropriately funded, fully implemented, and evaluated to determine if they actually accomplished their intended purposes. When interventions lack these characteristics, they are less likely to result in productivity improvement. Further, they may unnecessarily drain resources from areas of need.

Sound interventions will normally include the steps noted in Exhibit 5.3.1.

<b>Exhibit 5.3.1</b> Recommended Steps for Effective Implementation for Program Interventions	
1.	Assess the current situation.
2.	Diagnose data collected.
3.	Identify the problem or issue.
4.	Propose and examine alternatives.
5.	Select an alternative that best addresses the problem.
6.	Develop formal plans with measurable objectives to address the problem.
7.	Develop fiscal and human resources as needed through redistribution of resources.
8.	Implement with well-defined mechanisms for monitoring progress.
9.	Evaluate the results.
10.	Adjust activities as needed based on the data gathered through the evaluation process.
11.	Implement adjustments as needed.
12.	Continue to monitor performance and results.

In order to determine the status of interventions in use in the district, auditors reviewed pertinent information provided by the district's central office and various campuses. They interviewed board members, administrators, and staff about various interventions undertaken to improve student achievement and attain specified educational goals. In particular, auditors sought information about steps taken to develop, implement and evaluate interventions. Using this information, the audit team determined that district interventions generally did not meet audit criteria for effective implementation.

Auditors used documents provided by the staff to compile a list of the interventions most prevalent in district schools. That list is presented as Exhibit 5.3.2.

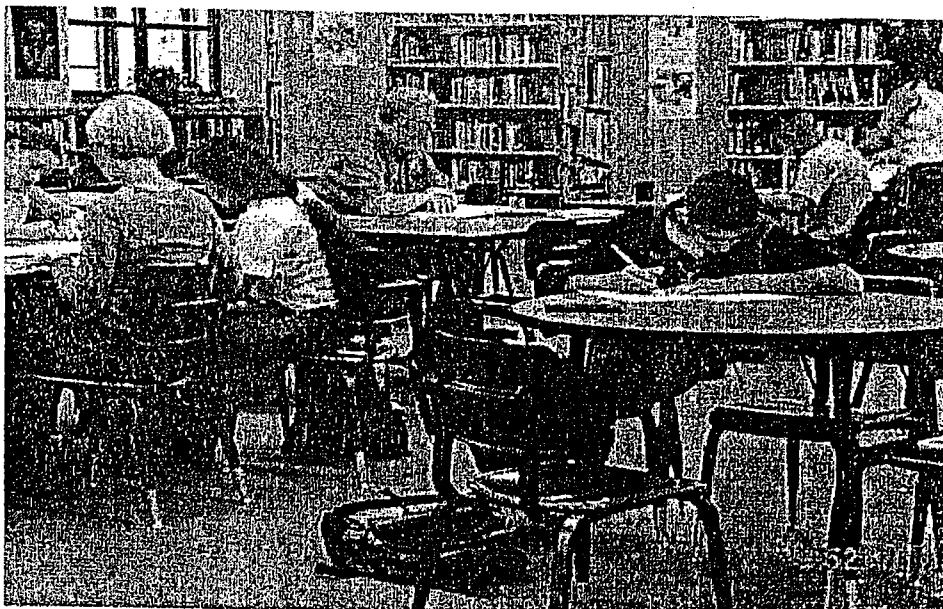
<b>Exhibit 5.3.2</b> Examples of Program Interventions Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 2000-2001	
<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Grade/Level</b>
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Initiative	Uvalde High School
Abstinence	Grades 4 to 12
Accelerated Reading Program	Athon, Benson, Robb, Batesville, Flores
Building Math Understanding	Grades 6 to 9
Building World Class Readers	Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12
Campus Assistance Teams	Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12
CCC Math Lab	Flores, Grades 5 to 6
Cognitive Modifications	Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12
Cooperative Discipline	Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12
Creative Education Institute Reading Labs	All schools except Dalton and Excel
Differential Instruction	Kindergarten to Grade 5
Dunn & Dunn Learning Styles	Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12
Full Option Science System	Grade 1 to 6
Marie Carbo Reading Styles	Kindergarten to Grade 12
Math A Way of Thinking	Grades 3 to 5
Math Their Way	Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12
Mountain Math	Athon, Benson, Robb, Batesville, Flores
New Jersey Grammar	Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12
New Jersey Reading	Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12
New Jersey Writing	Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12
Nova Net	Excel and High School
Pre-K Full Day	Dalton ES only

**Exhibit 5.3.2 (continued)**  
**Examples of Program Interventions**  
**Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District**  
**2000-2001**

Intervention	Grade/Level
Reading Academies	Kindergarten to Grade 2
Reading Recovery	Grade 1
Rebecca Sitton Spelling	Grades 1 to 8
Schools for 21st Century	Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12
Stevenson Reading	Athon, Benson, Robb, Batesville, Flores
Student Tutorial and Reward (STARS) Period	Uvalde High School
TAAS Master Exit	Excel High School of Choice
Technology 2000	Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12
Texas Library Connection	Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12

Documents and interviews indicated that:

- In many instances, program goals were not formally identified; where goals were identified, there was an absence of feedback criteria related to those goals.
- Interventions lacked detailed, documented processes for implementation.
- Most interventions lacked documentation of their estimated impact on student achievement and formal assessments to determine the actual impact.
- Resources for short- and long-term sustainment were not identified.



STAR Period at Uvalde High School

Auditors selected one intervention for analysis to determine if it conformed to audit criteria for implementation. The program was described as follows:

- **Program Name:** Student Tutorial and Reward (STAR) Period.
- **Purpose:** To improve the academic performance of all Uvalde High School Students.
- **Goals:** Provide tutoring during the school day for students needing assistance; limit class interruptions; reward academic and attendance excellence; and limit teacher tutoring time before and after school.

- Duration:** Fifty minutes, two times each day. The first time segment was between 9:30 a.m. and 10:20 a.m. The second time segment was at the end of the day. The tutorials normally begin at 9:50 a.m. The estimated allocation of teaching time per year devoted to this activity was a total of 90 hours (30 minutes per day for 180 school days). This amounted to approximately eight percent of the instructional hours during the school year.
- Procedures:** Students are given STAR passes to attend tutorials during the STAR Period if the subject area teacher deemed tutoring appropriate. There were no written criteria or requirements for student participation in a tutorial session, nor could the student elect to receive tutoring. Students with exceptional attendance and an average of 70 or above could be given passes to educational venues of their choice (e.g., library or writing laboratory).

The audit team's assessment of this intervention is provided in Exhibit 5.3.3.

<b>Exhibit 5.3.3</b>				
Comparison of the STAR Period Intervention to Intervention Criteria				
Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District				
May 2001				
<b>Intervention Criteria</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Not Evident</b>		
1. The intervention is related to documented district needs, assessment of curriculum effectiveness, and allocation of resources.		X		
2. Documents exist to define the purpose of the program, how it addresses the district's needs, how it will impact student achievement, and plans for implementation.	X			
3. A detailed process for implementing the program is provided, including strong communication and staff development components.		X		
4. Human, material, and fiscal resources needed are identified to initiate the program in the short-term, and to sustain the program in the long-term		X		
5. Formative feedback and summative evaluation criteria, which are tied to program goals, objectives, and expectations, are identified.	X			

The following comments are relevant to the ratings in Exhibit 5.3.3:

- Criterion 1** – This criterion is rated as not evident. No documentation was provided to auditors regarding needs assessment, curriculum effectiveness, or resources needed to sustain the intervention.
- Criterion 2** – This criterion was rated as evident because the intervention description stated the purpose of the program and provided implementation instructions. However, other aspects of this criterion were not documented.
- Criterion 3** – Criterion 3 was rated as not evident because no staff development was provided regarding best practices for reteaching or erasing learning deficits. Likewise, no communication plan was designed short of the STAR passes to track student participation and to measure success of the program.
- Criterion 4** – This criterion was rated as not evident because instructions for the intervention stated that teachers conducting tutorials "should limit the number of STAR passes to five per day." There was no documentation to support the implied assumption that no more than five students a day in each class would need tutoring. In fact, auditors received no estimates of the number of students per class needing tutoring. Without such estimates, the allocation of resources was arbitrary.
- Criterion 5** – Criterion 5 was rated as evident because there was a reward goal and a periodic review of grades to issue rewards. However, this was only one of four goals. The others were not addressed. Although tutoring was a centerpiece of the intervention, there was no explicit tutorial goal. Furthermore, there was no design for tight linkages between students needing

tutoring, students receiving tutoring, the effectiveness of tutorials, and modification of the intervention based on tutorial effectiveness feedback.

Auditors were present at Uvalde High School to observe activities during the morning STAR Period and visited 14 classrooms during that period of time. In 12 of the 14 classrooms observed, auditors could discern no organized learning activities in which teachers were actively teaching and students were actively engaged in the learning. In the classrooms observed, most students were either working from a textbook individually or were sitting idly. In many classrooms, one or more students was in a sleeping posture. If the data collected can be assumed to be typical, then auditors concluded that the STAR Period did not satisfy the audit criteria for sound implementation of a program intervention. Interviews revealed divergent views regarding evaluation of interventions within the district. The following is a sampling of staff comments:

- “Campuses can use programs as enrichment, but they have to show the ‘before’ and ‘after’ [data] to show the impact.”
- “[C]ampuses evaluate all of the programs they are using.”
- “Written reports of program evaluations should be available at the campuses. We have asked each year for them to look at their programs.”
- “There is absolutely no evaluation of programs in our district.”
- “We have to find out if things work or don’t work; I’m not sure we’re doing this at all campuses....”
- “I saw a lot of shotgun approaches in trying to improve test scores.”
- “We’ve never really stayed with something long enough to see the results.”
- “I am not familiar with the requirement for the annual evaluation of objectives.”

Auditors were provided with a draft form that the staff anticipated using to evaluate programs and interventions. Auditors made the following observations regarding this form:

- The form consisted of 22 questions. None require documentation of the need for the program.
- No specific statement was required concerning the anticipated impact on student achievement.
- Communications and staff development to support the program were not addressed.
- Nine questions concerned funding. Funds and staffing were addressed for two fiscal years. However, there was no requirement to estimate the time (months or years) required for the program or intervention to have the desired effect on student achievement. Hence, it would be impossible to analyze the sustainability of an intervention over its required life.
- One question addressed evaluation by simply asking if an annual or multi-year evaluation is required.
- Overall, the form did not satisfy the intervention criteria in Exhibit 5.3.3, nor did it support the type of program evaluation necessary for curriculum-driven budgeting as specified in Exhibit 5.2.1.

In summary, the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District officials were attempting to improve student achievement through the use of educational interventions and to evaluate the effectiveness of those interventions. However, these efforts did not meet audit criteria for sound implementation of educational interventions designed to improve student productivity.

#### **Finding 5.4: Some District Facilities Exhibit Substandard Levels of Maintenance, Safety, and Cleanliness.**

The physical environment of a school is an important indicator of the educational staff's ability to deliver the curriculum effectively. Facilities that have adequate space, are well maintained, well equipped, and clean create a learning environment that is pleasant and supports delivery of the

instructional program. When these qualities are lacking, conditions in physical facilities may impede delivery of the curriculum and the accomplishment of educational goals.

The audit team visited each of the district's schools and most of the classrooms where instruction was taking place to gather information on the learning environment and any special problems or impediments that existed in facilities. Auditors were specifically concerned with overall maintenance, physical atmosphere, accessibility, safety, and use of buildings. Interviews were conducted with board members, administrators, teachers, other staff, and community members. In addition, auditors reviewed board policies, facilities planning documents, and other documents referring to school buildings and grounds.

Auditors found that most schools required additional attention to cleanliness, maintenance, and safety issues. Further, there was no preventive maintenance plan to help preserve the district's physical assets.

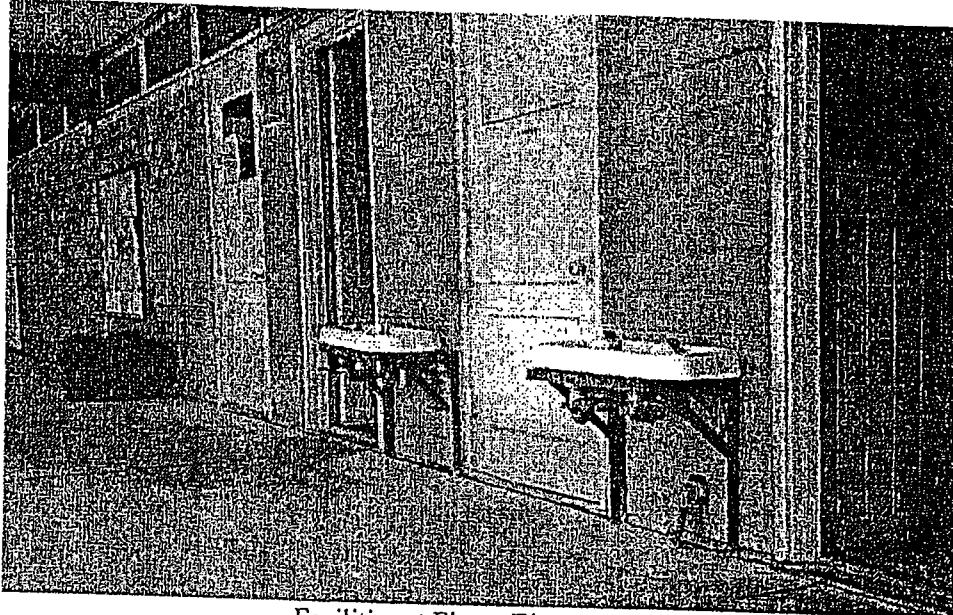
The following board policies are applicable to this finding:

- *Board Policy BJA (Local) Superintendent, Qualifications and Duties* charges the superintendent with the responsibility of ensuring "that the school plant and facilities are properly maintained and that adequate provision is made for safety of students, employees, and other users of school facilities."
- *Board Policy CKD (Legal) Safety Program: Risk Management: Accident Prevention and Reports* states, "Industrial-quality eye-protective devices shall be...worn by, every teacher and student in the district participating in ...courses [involving] milling, sawing, turning, shaping, cutting, or stamping of any solid materials."

Auditors reviewed documents presented by the district staff and found no preventive maintenance plan or schedule. Interviews with maintenance employees indicated that there was no written preventive maintenance plan for facilities and no systematic, comprehensive procedures to address preventive maintenance. When auditors visited schools, they observed conditions that did not indicate effective maintenance and repair support for the instructional program. Many of these problems had safety implications:

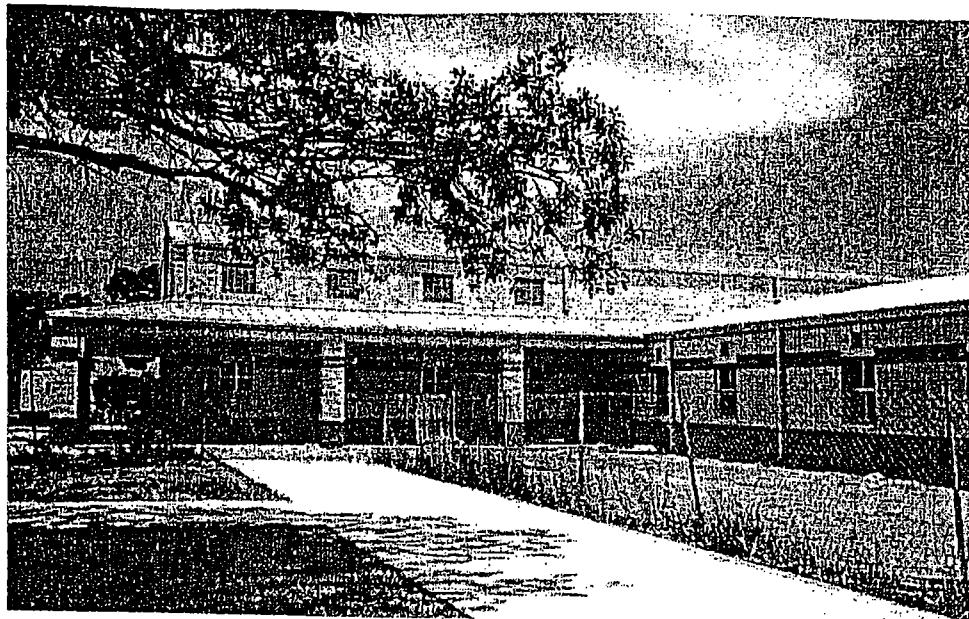
- **Anthon Elementary School** had two wings. The new wing was in good condition. In the old wing, auditors encountered broken light fixtures and exposed electrical wiring. This wing also needed painting and extensive repairs and was not in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Cleanliness was mediocre throughout.
- **Batesville Elementary/Middle School** was very clean. However, there were several maintenance and repair concerns: the grass needed mowing; there were leaks in the roof over the gymnasium and in the building where the 1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> grade students were housed. Several rooms, including the computer laboratory, had stains on the ceiling tiles suggestive of a leaking roof. In one classroom, damaged ceiling tiles hung precariously above the student work area. Auditors noted unpleasant odors in two boys' restrooms.
- **Benson Elementary School** had extensively damaged floor tiles, creating a safety hazard; some tile had been covered with carpet. Cleanliness was mediocre with unpleasant odors in a 4<sup>th</sup> grade portable building. The media center was housed in the auditorium due to insufficient space elsewhere. Again, auditors noted damaged ceiling tiles hanging precariously above student work areas.
- **Dalton Elementary School** needed extensive painting and repairs. The school was not in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- **Flores Elementary School** was clean, but in poor condition. The building was in need of paint and improved lighting. Carpets and portable classrooms needed repair. The roof over the covered walkway was rotting; exposed radiators were located in classrooms and hallways; restrooms did not meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act.



Facilities at Flores Elementary

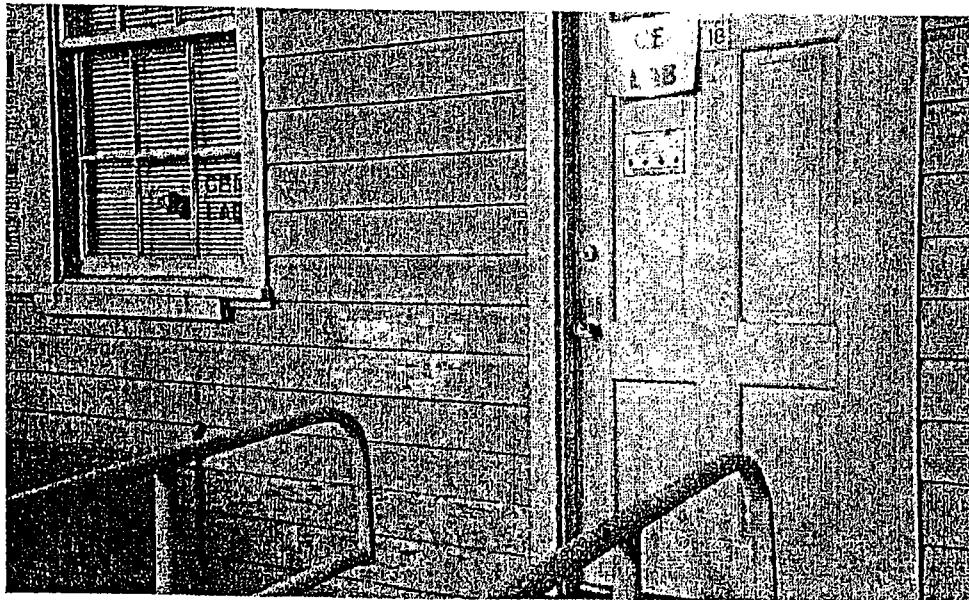
- **Robb Elementary School** was very clean, but in need of maintenance. Auditors noted rusting roof supports and siding. Beams supporting the sidewalk canopy were rotting. Ceiling tiles were missing, damaged, and hanging precariously above student work areas. The grass needed mowing.
- **Excel Academy** was exceptionally clean and well maintained.
- **Uvalde Junior High School** was in poor condition. The building was in need of paint and improved lighting. Classrooms and hallways were cluttered. There was the strong odor of mold in Room 801.
- **Uvalde High School** required maintenance; cleanliness was mediocre. Some classroom and hall carpets were dirty and stained. Several unsafe conditions were noted: students in a shop class were operating power equipment without the required eye protection; severely damaged carpet was observed on steps outside a portable classroom; pipes protruded from a wall where appliances had been removed in a boys' restroom. Some boys' restrooms were not clean.



New Uvalde High School Facilities

Storage was also a problem in some buildings. Computers at Uvalde High School and the Batesville Elementary/Middle School were stored in a disorganized manner without any attempt to protect them from dust or moisture.

Auditors were told that the building program to be implemented in the near future would address many of the maintenance and compliance problems. However, the lack of a written preventive maintenance plan could result in the deterioration of both existing and projected facilities. Auditors concluded that maintenance planning was inadequate and that maintenance and safety operations provided ineffective support for the educational program.



Need for Preventative Maintenance

#### **IV. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASA-TCMAC CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT AUDIT TEAM FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE UVALDE CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT.**

Based on the three streams of data derived from interviews, documents, and site visits, the Texas Curriculum Management Audit Team has developed a set of recommendations to address its findings shown under each standard of the audit.

In the case of the findings, they have been triangulated, i.e., corroborated with one another. In the case of the recommendations, those put forth in this section are representative of the auditors' best professional judgments regarding how to address the problems that surfaced in the audit.

The recommendations are presented in the order of their criticality for initiating system-wide improvements. The recommendations also recognize and differentiate between the policy and monitoring responsibilities of the board of education, and the operational and administrative duties of the superintendent of schools.

Where the TASA-TCMAC audit team views a problem as wholly or partly a policy and monitoring matter, the recommendations are formulated for the board of education. Where the problem is distinctly an operational or administrative matter, the recommendations are directed to the superintendent of schools as the chief executive officer of the school system. In many cases, the audit team directs recommendations to both the board and the superintendent, because it is clear that policy and operations are related, and both entities are involved in a proposed change. In some cases, there are no recommendations to the superintendent when only policy is involved or none to the board when the recommendations deal only with administration.

Audit recommendations are presented as follows: The overarching goals for the board and/or the superintendent, followed by the specific objectives to carry out the overarching goals. The latter are designated "Governance Functions" and "Administrative Functions."

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##### **Recommendation 1: Develop Comprehensive Board Policies and Administrative Regulations to Direct Curriculum Design and Delivery.**

A comprehensive set of policies is necessary for effective curriculum management. Without definitive policies, the district cannot ensure program focus, effectiveness, or consistency. Comprehensive board policies provide clear direction for curriculum development and instructional delivery and set goals for attaining improved student achievement. Maintaining quality control of curriculum requires the board to develop, review, and revise its policies periodically. This process may result in adding, revising, or eliminating policies to address the changing needs of the school district. As the board adopts policies, it is important that changes and expectations are clearly and thoroughly communicated to all staff and the implementation strategies for communication are identified. It is critical for the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District to attend to the development and use of policy related to curriculum management.

The current set of board policies in Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District is inadequate to direct the design, delivery, and assessment of the curriculum, as well as control over other organizational efforts and initiatives (see Finding 1.1). For example, current policy does not require comprehensive long-range planning (see Finding 1.2), does not require that there be written curriculum in all subject/learning areas (see Finding 2.1 and Finding 2.2), and contains no quality expectations for curriculum guides (see Finding 2.3). While board policy does require teachers to teach the prescribed state course of study, it does not require teachers to teach the district's curriculum (see Finding 2.4). Similarly, policy requires the curriculum delivery to be monitored, but lacks specificity in providing guidelines and expectations for this important component of curriculum management.

No board policy was found mandating articulation and coordination of the curriculum (see Finding 3.1) or staff development related to curriculum delivery (see Finding 3.3). On the other hand, there were a number of policies requiring equitable access to the curriculum and related programs (see Finding 3.2). Adequate board policy exists related to the implementation of student and program assessment (see Finding 4.1); however, there is no policy requirement for assessment in all subject/learning areas (see Finding 4.2).

Board policy for Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District does not mandate curriculum-driven budgeting (see Finding 5.2); nor is there a requirement for the development of standard criteria for program adoption, implementation, and evaluation (see Finding 5.3). And finally policies are inadequate to provide direction to support service departments (see Finding 5.4).

As the administration and board undertake this task, the following guidelines should be considered:

- Policies should establish clear direction for the system.
- Policies should provide for local initiatives to enhance the system beyond state directives.
- Policies should ensure consistency of action over time as individual members of the board and administration change office.
- Policies should guide professional staff members in their individual efforts to improve direction in the school system.
- Policies should establish the framework for the district to monitor progress in the delivery and attainment of district learning goals.
- Policies should establish a historical base for the district for the purpose of avoiding contradictory actions.
- Policies should establish a framework of evaluation for all employees of the district and require the development and execution of professional development plans based on the evaluation.
- Policies should delineate levels of decision-making authority.

Policy should direct educational decisions. The board and superintendent should put in place specific approaches and procedures to ensure that policies and administrative regulations are continually reviewed and updated and that policies are used for decision making.

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District Board of Trustees:

**G.1.1:** Direct the superintendent to develop a draft comprehensive curriculum management policy that meets the 26 criteria for control, direction, equity and consistency, feedback, and productivity as presented in Exhibit 1.1.2.

**G.1.2:** Review, critique, and adopt this policy by January 1, 2002.

**G.1.3:** Direct the superintendent to implement and monitor this policy and provide assessment reports to the board on policy implementation and effectiveness.

**G.1.4:** Require that appropriate administrative procedures be developed to support this policy.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District Superintendent:

**A.1.1:** Comply with board directive related to recommended Action G.1.1 and facilitate board activities during this policy review, critique, and adoption process. A sample curriculum management policy is provided (see Appendix C).

**A.1.2:** Implement and evaluate the adequacy of the policy and the effectiveness of staff in following the policy; provide training as necessary; and provide yearly reports to the board on policy implementation and effectiveness.

**A.1.3:** Create an administrative procedures handbook that supports and is aligned to board policy.

**A.1.4:** Require each administrator to ensure that staff is aware of, understands, and follows relevant policy.

**Recommendation 2: Implement a Comprehensive, Long-range Planning Process that Provides a Coherent and Consistent Focus for Enhanced Student Achievement.**

Comprehensive long-range planning is essential in organizing and focusing district resources to meet student needs in the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District (see Finding 1.2). It provides a systemic means of sustaining constancy of purpose as the district works toward achieving its goals. Constancy of purpose is critical to the improvement of educational enterprises. This benefits the students by increasing the probability that effective programs, practices, and schooling arrangements will be available to them and that their achievement will improve.

A comprehensive long-range planning process must have the intent of openness so that data and information may flow freely among interested parties. Such openness increases the probability that the board will have access to the variety of facts and viewpoints necessary to establish sound and supportable plans. Openness requires participation by all organizational stakeholders, including school personnel, members of the board of trustees, and broad community commitment from representatives of business, parent groups, and other patrons.

Comprehensive system-wide planning is especially critical in districts that face enrollment increases or declines and/or in districts whose population profiles are changing. A comprehensive plan allows the board and administration to see all needs of the district in relationship to each other. This enables the planners to prioritize and schedule those initiatives that logically fit together. This type of planning produces the greatest return for the time, energy, and money invested.

The Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District has no policy requiring long-range planning (see Finding 1.1). Auditors were not presented with a comprehensive long-range plan for the district, and annual planning did not address many of the needs of the district identified by the audit (see Finding 1.2). Other components of comprehensive plans were not found. These included curriculum management planning (see Finding 2.1 and Finding 3.1) and student and program assessment planning (see Finding 4.1). Additionally, planning for a curriculum-driven budget does not currently exist in the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District (see Finding 5.1). While a long-range facilities plan does exist in the district, it is not regularly evaluated, and no planning is in place for scheduling preventative maintenance (see Finding 5.4).

**Governance Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District Board of Trustees:

**G.2.1:** Approve a policy that requires long-range planning to specifically address the following areas identified in the Curriculum Management Audit of the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District:

- Curriculum management planning that designs and delivers the written, taught, and tested curriculum;
- A system for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum;
- A comprehensive student assessment program;
- Staff development training for all appropriate staff in the design, delivery, and monitoring of the written, taught, and tested curriculum;
- Program assessment planning;
- Curriculum-driven budgeting (see Recommendation 5); and
- Facilities planning including periodic updates and re-evaluations and a timeline for preventive maintenance of district facilities.

**G.2.2:** Approve a local policy that calls for the development of a planning calendar.

**G.2.3:** Require the superintendent to make periodic reports to the board on the status of system planning in the district.

**Administrative Functions:** The following actions are recommended to the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District Superintendent:

**A.2.1:** Assist the board in developing a comprehensive, long-range planning policy that addresses the areas identified in Action G.2.1.

**A.2.2:** Develop components or strategies within the comprehensive plan addressing the needs identified by the Curriculum Management Audit using the steps suggested below with each component:

Design a curriculum management component of the plan to include the following:

- The district's philosophical approach to the curriculum;
- A curriculum review cycle for all disciplines;
- A consistent curriculum guide format based on audit criteria (see Exhibit 2.3.1);
- Delineation of roles and responsibilities for curriculum-related decision making for district administrators, principals, teachers, school-based improvement teams, and district committees;
- Expectations for the delivery of the curriculum;
- Instruction for monitoring the curriculum that includes specific procedures and criteria for principals and other staff;
- Timing, scope and procedures for curriculum review and adoption;
- Selection procedures for instructional resources;
- A process for integrating technology into the curriculum; and
- A process for communicating curricular revisions to the board, staff, and community.

Design quality curriculum using the following steps:

- Establish for the discipline a complete set of goals and objectives that are linked to the district's mission and goals, are aligned with state content standards, and meet the unique needs of Uvalde students.
- Align objectives with the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test and other assessments to be used in the district. Be sure to include examples of assessment questions in the guide so that teachers can see the format of the new TAKS questions and then teach for deep alignment.
- Determine prerequisite skills or concepts needed to learn the objectives.
- Match objectives with supplemental instructional resources including textbooks.
- Integrate instructional technology.
- Design life applications for student activities within the curriculum.
- Develop specific examples and model lessons on how to approach key concepts or skills in the classroom, including a variety of techniques for enhancing and/or modifying to meet special needs of students.
- Align instructional strategies with the context of state and local assessments.
- Obtain feedback from the curriculum users regarding the degree to which all components are easily understood and incorporated in daily lesson planning.
- Use external consultants or "friendly critics" to critique the process and products during the design stage.
- Field-test the curriculum.
- Evaluate the curriculum's effectiveness in terms of student achievement.
- Revise field-tested curriculum based on feedback and results of student assessment.
- Submit curriculum for adoption to the board.

- Remove outdated curriculum guides from the schools and district offices.

- Secure sufficient financial resources to accomplish the design and delivery process.

Develop a system for monitoring curriculum delivery throughout the district. The superintendent should expect principals to see that the curriculum is being taught in the classrooms. The following are recommended for the structure of the classroom observations by the principals and/or central staff:

- Specify time-on-task (how many students in the room are on-task and/or off-task when observed);
- Determine the curriculum objective and the cognitive level of the objective that is being taught in the classroom;
- Compare taught objectives to the district curriculum for congruence;
- Determine alignment of activities/resources to the objective(s) being taught;
- Determine effective teaching practices taking place;
- Specify other objectives and teaching practices observed on walls, charts, chalkboards, centers, etc.; and
- Plan when feedback will be given to the teacher and whether the feedback will be provided in writing or orally.

Develop a comprehensive student assessment program including the following components:

- The state student assessment system (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills - TAKS);
- District-level, criterion-referenced tests for significant district selected objectives across all grades levels and in all core content areas;
- A variety of formative assessment strategies with a focus on feedback for improvement;
- Schedules and timelines linking results of assessments to a curriculum review and revision process on a continual basis;
- Appropriate measures of student success, such as open-ended assessment items, performance-based demonstrations, and portfolios with clearly delineated measurement criteria;
- High school end-of-course examinations to measure the exit objectives of each course;
- Expectations on how the faculty and staff will administer and use evaluation data and the role of central office staff in the assessment process; and
- Expectations regarding how the assessment data and process will be communicated to the public.

Provide staff development for all personnel involved with the design, delivery, and monitoring of the curriculum including the following steps:

- Identify target areas based on board-approved priorities and district- and school-level needs assessments with particular emphasis on curriculum development, effective instructional practices for curriculum delivery, deep curriculum alignment, and student assessment. Focus on organizational change that is data-driven and based on alignment with district goals;
- Develop a long-term prioritized training and development program that is required for all professional and support staff designed to occur over a three- to five-year time period in order to achieve adequate gains in student achievement;
- Require application of skills and learning with appropriate follow-up coaching and evaluation for all new concepts and skills learned;
- Require training in walk-through techniques for all central and campus administrators to enhance skills in monitoring of the delivery of the curriculum;
- Require an evaluation process for all staff development that is ongoing, has multiple sources of information, focuses on all levels of the organization, is based on actual changed behavior, and reflects student achievement.

Design a program assessment component using the following steps:

- Assess the current district/campus needs;
- Diagnose data collected;
- Identify the problem(s) or gap(s) in achievement;
- Propose and examine alternative solutions;
- Select an alternative that best addresses the problem/gap;
- Develop goals and measurable objectives for each program or intervention;
- Provide fiscal and human resources as needed through the redistribution of resources;
- Implement the program/intervention with well-defined mechanisms for monitoring progress;
- Evaluate the program/intervention;
- Adjust the program as needed, based on data gathered;
- Implement modifications based on adjustments made; and
- Require that all requests for district or campus initiatives be accompanied by justifications aligned to the system plan and implementation timelines.

Begin the process of program assessment for all new programs/interventions proposed immediately. Additionally, schedule a full evaluation of all existing programs within the district to be completed within three years of the receipt of this report. In light of the financial situation of the district, begin by evaluating those programs for which the most local money is currently being spent. Remember that costs include not only materials and technology, but also personnel.

Establish as part of the comprehensive plan, a review process for the Facilities Master Plan component. Include with that component of the district long-range plan a system of preventive maintenance for district facilities following the steps listed below:

- Annually evaluate the existing Facilities Master Plan of the district.
- Develop a preventative maintenance schedule for all facilities in the district including but not limited to the following:
  - Painting
  - Carpet cleaning and/or replacement
  - HVAC repair/replacement
  - Roof repair/replacement
- Annually budget for the preventative maintenance schedules for the subsequent fiscal year.
- Provide periodic reports to the board on the facilities projects completed.

#### A.2.3: Create a planning calendar for board approval including the following:

- Time frames with dates for the approval of new planning components that meet audit criteria and/or new challenges or needs identified during the evaluation process for the plan,
- Time frames with scheduled formative evaluations of all plan components, and
- Time frames for summative evaluation of all plans.

The planning calendar should be designed so that annual plans are prepared prior to the development of the budget and are approved and implemented within the first month of the school year. To accomplish this, data will have to be collected during the school year through the receipt of any state-mandated test results. At that point, the actual plan creation will take place so that as soon as the school year begins, all new staff and parents in the district are aware of priority plans and the needs that support those plans. The district then has an entire year to implement the plan and measure results.

#### A.2.4: Develop administrative regulations that spell out the appropriate implementation timelines procedures, and monitoring expectations for all planning efforts.